

WEST MARVA DISTRICT MEMO NOVEMBER 2023

384 Dennett Road
Oakland, MD 21550
301-334-9270

Brenda Harvey, Administrative Assistant (301-616-1367)
www.westmarvachurches.org



Comments from Jennifer S. Kreighbaum, 2023 District Conference Moderator and 2024 Board Chair

As we push toward colder temperatures and toward seasons of thanksgiving and miracles, let us not forget to be thankful for how God worked through our district conference. As expected, Moorefield Church of the Brethren was a marvelous host for the conference and for the conference lunch. Friday evening was a beautiful worship experience with *Anchored* harmonizing perfectly in musical performance. Nate Polzin, Executive Director of Discipleship & Leadership Formation for the Church of the Brethren, provided a challenging message on the theme of unswerving hope. A friend since the days of seminary, Nate was just what I hoped he would be when I invited him; a grounded in scripture, heartfelt challenge to us to maintain hope through the bread, body, and bubbles. For those who missed it, you had to be there to understand his intentionality at alliteration. Cookies and fellowship were enjoyed in the fellowship hall afterward, as provided by Westernport Church of the Brethren.

Saturday combined the perfect blend of worship, business, food, and simple fellowship. Hanging Rock provided the breakfast to help us be ready for the day ahead. Dan Moon led the congregation in singing to the piano accompaniment of Brenda Combs. After worship, we moved into a time of business, considering our budget, ballot, recognition of churches who have left the denomination, hearing reports from Eder Financial and the Mission and Ministry Board as well as Bethany Seminary, pastoral recognitions for years of service, and prayers of condolences for those in ministry who have passed. My personal favorite part of District Conference was the good news reports, where Denny Skeweris talked of the District's recent disaster trip to Kentucky and the 8 volunteers helping those whose lives have been in upheaval followed by Bob Combs praising God for the new church building that Hanging Rock Church has built. God is alive through both good news reports!

Special thanks to Brenda Harvey for her work in preparing for District Conference and for her 30 plus years of service to our district. Additional thanks to the district board for their service in helping our district to hear the voice of God, the hearts of our churches, and be ambassadors of the faith for West Marva, with special gratitude to Linda Sanders for her chairing of the board during the time of pandemic to current. Prayers of blessings and strength are in order for Bob Combs, upcoming district moderator for 2024, and Allie Crowe, district moderator-elect for 2024 and moderator for 2025.

As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches and we begin to advent the coming of the Christ Child, may we pause in gratitude for the promised presence of our God in our lives, in our churches, and the district. Often, we take for granted that presence. May we continue to invite Jesus to our tables, our worship, and into our hearts in new and powerful ways. Born in a manger, yes...may he also be born in our thankful hearts to transform our lives daily. Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year to you all!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM DISTRICT CONFERENCE:

Betty Dzubba, conference clerk read Resolutions of Condolence for Louise Nealis (1939-2023), John Walker (1939-2023) and J. Rogers Fike (1930-2023). Also mentioned were former District Executive Ministers of West Marva District, Peter Leddy and Sylvus Flora who also passed during 2023.

Business Item #1: The updated list, since September 2022 of churches that have withdrawn from the denomination were announced.

John Ellifritz, chair of the Ministry Commission conducted a service in recognition of the years of service for Ordained Ministers: **Don Matthews** 55 years **Randy Ours** 35 years **Burl Charlton** 25 years
Diane May 15 years **Donald Judy** 5 years

Conference Statistics were given: Attendance Friday night: 60 with offering of \$314.00; Saturday there were 55 delegates, 14 non-delegates; 18 churches represented and the offering Saturday was \$491.04.

Business Item #2: The Ballot for 2024 was presented by Bob Combs and accepted after being distributed by the tellers. The results of the ballot were: Alicia Crowe—Moderator elect; District Conference Planning & Arrangements—Betty Wolford; Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team—Brenda Combs; Camp Galilee Trustee—Charlie Moore; District Board Chair—Jennifer Kreighbaum (1 year term); Ministerial Leadership Team—Anna Skeweris and Denzil Davis; Financial Resources Team—Linda Sanders; Spiritual Growth Team—Lisa Upole Schlosnagle and Mission and Evangelism Team—Thelma Cox.

Business Item #3: On recommendation by the Board, the proposed 2024 West Marva District Budget was presented by Beverly Vetter, Bill Shomo and Linda Sanders. The District Board brought the 2024 Budget as a recommendation to the delegates, the budget was approved as recommended.

Thank You God For Everything

Thank you, God, for everything –
the big things and the small –
For every good gift comes from God,
the giver of them all.
And all too often we accept
without any thanks or praise
The gifts God sends as blessings
each day in many ways.
And so at this Thanksgiving time
we offer up a prayer
To thank you God, for giving us
a lot more than our share.
Thank you for the miracles
we are much too blind to see.
And give us a new awareness
of our many gifts from Thee.
And help us to remember
that the key to life and living
Is to make each prayer a prayer of thanks
and every day Thanksgiving.

By: Helen Steiner Rice

October District Board Meeting Report

Thank you, Hanging Rock Church, for hosting the October board meeting, Pastors Bob and Brenda Combs for leading the devotions and music, and the church family for providing the delicious lunch. It was a pleasure to be hosted in your new church building. God has blessed your church and community.

The four commissions each reported on plans for the upcoming year. Spiritual Growth Team reported being in the planning stages for a Pulpit Exchange, Pastors and Deacons Appreciation Dinner, and possibly a Deacons Workshop, songfest, and picnic. The Ministerial Leadership Team reported their team will be contacting pastors to discuss their CEU progress. The Mission and Evangelism Team reported they are contacting pastors to identify issues or needs their team could help with. They are thinking about ways to reach out to the community and one possibility could be a health and drug awareness program. The Financial Resources Team reported income through September was \$31,940.04 and expenses were \$28,811.79. They worked with Mutual Aid to ensure the appropriate coverage and cost for both the district office and the rental of the parsonage.

In other business, the 2023 Interim District Leadership Team reported they continue to pray for pastors and churches within the district, are meeting with churches who have concerns, have created through the board a DEM search team, completed working on the rental of the parsonage, and meet with the District Administrative Assistant regularly. Since July, Anna Skeweris and Linda Sanders met with four churches who voted to withdraw from the denomination. We appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve and work with the 30 churches of our district. If you have any comments or questions for the Interim District Leadership Team, Anna's phone number is 240-321-1561, e-mail: annasauder@gmail.com and Linda's phone number is 301-501-7292, e-mail: dlslanders@verizon.net.

The District Disaster Team reported they had a group who went to a Kentucky disaster site in August to work with Brethren Disaster Ministries. In March 2024 there will be another opportunity for volunteers to go to a site in western Kentucky to work. For anyone interested in volunteering a week of their time to help, you may contact Denny Skeweris at 301-616-0013.

Several appointments were made:

- Alicia Crowe will serve as the new Ministry Training Program Director beginning January 1, 2024. Jennifer Kreighbaum will assist Allie as needed.
- Anna Skeweris, Linda Sanders, and Jennifer Kreighbaum will continue to serve as the Interim District Leadership Team for 2024.
- Bob Combs, Carl Fike, and Linda Sanders will serve on the Search Team effective immediately to begin work on the District Executive Minister search process.

Our next district board meeting is in January 2024, and we welcome the new members elected at district conference. A list of all board members, executive committee members, and dates of meetings is included in this memo.

May God bless our churches and pastors.

Linda Sanders,
District Board Chair

Mission and Ministry Board Reorganization:

The District Board met Saturday, September 16 at the Moorefield Church for their re-organizational meeting. The following is a listing of all Teams and their members, meeting dates, etc.

Interim Leadership Team:

Anna Skeweris annasauder@gmail.com 240-321-1561
Linda Sanders dlsanders@verizon.net 301-501-7292
Jennifer Kreighbaum jkreighbaum335@comcast.net 301-501-7245

2023-2024 Mission and Ministry Board

Board Chair: Jennifer Kreighbaum jkreighbaum335@comcast.net (2025)
310 M Street, Oakland, MD 21550 301-501-7245
Vice-Chair: Thelma Cox queen2knights4@frontier.net (2026-2)
4649 Headsville Rd., Keyser, WV 26726 304-289-3027

Ex-Officio Members:

Recording Sec.: Beverly Vetter, P. O. Box 352, Moorefield, WV 26836 304-434-2578
fwv@hardynet.com
Treasurer: Beverly Vetter, P. O. Box 352, Moorefield, WV 26836 304-434-2578
fwv@hardynet.com
Assistant Treasurer: Jennifer Kreighbaum, 310 M Street, Oakland, MD 21550
301-501-7245 jkreighbaum335@comcast.net
Assistant Treasurer: Carl Fike, P. O. Box 126, Oakland, MD 21550 301-334-4840
Crfike56@gmail.com
Financial Sec.: Brenda Harvey, 5558 Oakland Sang Run Rd., Oakland, MD 21550 301-616-1367

Moderator Robert Combs, Moderator-elect Alicia Crowe, Immediate Past Moderator Jennifer Kreighbaum, and Standing Committee Delegate Dan Ludwick.

Ministerial Leadership Team

CHAIR: John Ellifritz jellifritz@k12.wv.us (2024-1)
3511 Russeldale Road, Purgitsville, WV 304-701-7013
VICE CHAIR: Denzil Davis dnsrestfnb@gmail.com (2026-2)
P. O. Box 7, Augusta, WV 26704 304-496-8329
SECRETARY: Anna Skeweris annasauder@gmail.com (2026-2)
7545 George Washington Hwy., Oakland, MD 21550 240-321-1561

Spiritual Growth:

CHAIR: Richard Funk debfunk@frontiernet.net (2025-1)
141 Lower Arkansaw Rd., Baker, WV 26801 304-897-5319
VICE CHAIR: Betty Elliott (2024-1)
181 Durr Road, Oakland, MD 21550 301-334-3039
SECRETARY: Lisa Upole-Schlosnagle kellisa@verizon.net (2026-1)
28178 Garrett Highway, Accident, MD 21520 802-522-9431
Brenda Combs hangingrock12@outlook.com (2026-1)
P. O. Box 815, Augusta, WV 26704 304-359-0652

Mission & Evangelism Team

CHAIR: Thelma Cox queen2knights4@frontier.net (2026-2)
4649 Headsville Rd., Keyser, WV 26726 304-289-3027
VICE CHAIR: Thomas Woods poboyzcrewchief@aol.com (2024-1)
214 Springdale Road, Cumberland, MD 21502 863-557-7365
SECRETARY: Ron Gordon thesidearm01@gmail.com (2024-1)
40 Country Retreat Drive, Upper Tract, WV 26866 304-257-4540
Denny Skeweris denskew@hotmail.com (2025-1)
7545 George Washington Hwy., Oakland, MD 21550 301-616-0013

Financial Resources Team

CHAIR: Bill Shomo bill.shomo@gmail.com (2024-1)
116 South 8th Street, Oakland, MD 21550 301-501-1655

VICE CHAIR: Linda Sanders dlsissanders@verizon.net (2026-1)
1200 Broadford Road, Oakland, MD 21550 301-501-7292

SECRETARY: Bev Vetter (Ex-Officio member)
P. O. Box 352, Moorefield, WV 26836 304-434-2578
Teresa Browning teebrowninbg87@gmail.com (2026-1)
857 Old Crellin Road, Oakland, MD 21550 301-616-5873
Chris Curry billyhillis4real@gmail.com (2026-1)
204 Dusk Drive, Augusta, WV 26704 240-310-5442

TREASURER CAMP GALILEE (Send all checks to:)
Camp Galilee, Attention: Jay Anderson, P. O. Box 146, Terra Alta, WV 26764
(Phone number for Jay Anderson – 304-789-62640)

TREASURER CAMP HOPE (Send all checks to:)
Elizabeth Tincher, 173 Laurel Mountain Road, Belington, WV 26250 304-614-1231

DISTRICT DISASTER PROGRAM (Send all checks to:)
District Disaster Program, c/o West Marva District Office, 384 Dennett Road, Oakland, MD 21550

DISTRICT BOARD - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING DATES:

The Executive Committee consists of the chair and vice-chair of the Board and the four Leadership Team chairs. Ex-Officio members consists of the district treasurer, financial secretary, interim district leadership team (serving in place of a DEM), district Moderator, and moderator-elect.

Dates for Executive Committee meetings:
January 9, 2024 at 6:00 pm District Office
April 2, 2024 at 6:00 pm District Office
July 2, 2024 at 6:00 pm District Office
October 1, 2024 at 6:00 pm District Office

Dates for West Marva Board meetings:
January 27, 2024 at 8:30 am Westernport Church of the Brethren
April 20, 2024 at 8:30 am Gortner Union Church of the Brethren
July 20, 2024 at 8:30 am Bear Creek Church of the Brethren
October 19, 2024 at 8:30 am Moorefield Church of the Brethren

(PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR MISSION AND MINISTRY BOARD MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO ANYONE WHO WISHES TO ATTEND)



BRETHREN BITS - BETTY DZUBBA

BEAR CREEK *I continue to enjoy learning about our congregations and am convinced we need to honor the important founding work of those faithful servants who wished to create houses of worship that we continue to use today.*

It is not known when the first religious services were held in the Bear Creek Valley. A historical article published in the *Brethren Almanac* in 1873, references the growth of congregations before 1810 in Pennsylvania and “western” Maryland.

Bear Creek is located in a section known as the Appalachian Plateau. There were worshippers gathering some years earlier at Sandy Creek and some attending the Salem Meeting house during those early years. There is mention of a Brethren settlement in Bear Creek Cove by 1810.

Brethren settlements in Maryland grew steadily as families moved here to clear lands and settle this area. This was an area that attracted farmers of Germanic heritage. Some of the oldest Lutheran congregations in our region have their roots in Preston County and surrounding areas, but also the Reformed, Mennonites and Amish as well as Dunkers were attracted to the unclaimed countryside. An Amish community still exists in the fertile lands near Oakland.

We learn that until Bear Creek obtained their own ministers, services were provided to pioneer families by ministers of the Sandy Creek and Elklick congregations. Some early ministers were Jacob Fike, John Boger, Michael Buechley (Beeghly), and Peter Livengood.

One of the early families in the Bear Creek community was Elder Jacob Beeghly, Jr. who purchased land in Bear Creek Cove by 1825, possibly earlier. An influx of Beeghly and related families from Pennsylvania purchased many acres of land in this area.

In early years there was a church known as “Bear Creek Cove” a short distance north of Accident, Maryland and just west of Route 219. Apparently a migration of several Beeghly and related families obtained property in this locality.

Jacob Beeghly, Jr. born in 1818 moved from southern Somerset County Pennsylvania into the Bear Creek area in 1839. He served in the Bear Creek Congregation until 1858 when he moved some miles westward to within the bounds of the Sandy Creek Congregation.

His son Jeremiah served in the ministry at Bear Creek for fifty-two years. Jeremiah is credited with “building up the congregation after his father moved in 1858” according to Allegheny Passage in the words of Dr. Bittinger. In addition to helping to sustain the work established by his father and grandfather, Jeremiah was actively involved in establishing other mission points which he faithfully nurtured.

Over the years devoted religious leaders preached and guided the work at Bear Creek. Samuel A. Miller served Bear Creek and Maple Grove churches. He was minister for forty-eight years until his death March 3, 1929.

In 1898 the congregation changed its name from Bear Creek to Accident. The reasoning was they were closer to Accident than to Bear Creek. However, when Jacob Mosser left his estate in 1906 to the Bear Creek Church, the members wisely returned to the old name.

A former pastor, Arthur Scrogum in 1946 reported to the *Glades Star*, the date of organization for the congregation was 1846. Details were taken from congregational census which noted Bear

Creek had forty-six members in 1846. Dr. Bittinger offers the information there is other information indicating there were other dates, possibly in 1849.

The first meeting house of the congregation is said to have been built in 1858, although no deed was transferred. The church was simple and typical of pioneer times. Benches were without backs, most likely homemade. The ministers sat behind a plain table. Two doors, one for women and children and one for men were the normal entrances.

By 1889 the old church needed to be replaced. The present structure was constructed on the same location. Five years later, Jonas Beeghy and wife donated ground beside the church for a cemetery. This replaced an earlier graveyard located on what was then known as the William Miller farm.

Improvements have continued over the years for the church building. Some pastors who have served during the past century were Arthur Scrogum, Olonzo Fike, Connell Chaney, W. E. Hamilton, J. Rogers Fike (two different times), Duane Lewellan, William Shimer from 1970 (for twenty five years), Kevin Staggs, Jennifer Kreighbaum served as interim, then Jennifer and Lisa Uphole-Schlosnagle began a team ministry.

CHURCH NEWS:

Wes Bergen, pastor of the **Morgantown Church of the Brethren**, reported that Deb Bergen volunteered with Children's Disaster Service, part of Brethren Disaster Ministries, in Lahaina, Hawaii, August 15-September 6.

Morgantown COB continues to host groups of volunteers on their way to the Brethren Disaster Ministries site in Dawson Springs, KY.

The congregation at **Hanging Rock Church** would like to give a follow-up report, a "praise report," on the progress of building of our new church! We are adding finishing touches as we receive donated funds from our people, the local community, and our Church of the Brethren friends. All the audiovisual systems are now set up and running. We now have two mini-split units providing heat and AC. Pastor Bob, with the help of volunteers, has built roofs over both entrances. They also just completed a fence along the road. Our attendance has risen significantly, including the addition of young families. We even have people from the surrounding developments walking to the church on Sunday mornings! Our Sunday youth program has grown and Wednesday evening Bible study is attracting a large following. But, there is still work to be done! We want to thank all who have supported this effort with prayers and financial gifts. You joining in with us has built up our faith, and we look forward to spreading the Gospel message for years to come.



**Church of the Brethren
West Marva District Office
384 Dennett Road
Oakland, MD 21550
November 2023**

IN GOD WE TRUST

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Executive Committee meeting, January 9, 2024 at 6:00 pm District Office
Mission and Ministry Board meeting, January 27, 2024 at 8:30 am Westernport Church**

A MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT INTERIM LEADERSHIP TEAM

We are needing to clean up our Memo mailing list. Many of you already receive the Memo electronically. Some of you still receive it by mail, but if you would like to begin receiving it electronically, please let Brenda know by sending her an email address at WestMarva@brethren.org

If you are a member of West Marva District and would like to continue to receive it by mail please contact Brenda at the office (301-616-1367 or email at westmarva@brethren.org). **IF WE DO NOT HEAR FROM YOU WE WILL NO LONGER BE ABLE TO SEND YOU THE HARDCOPY OF THE MEMO.**

If you are not a member of West Marva we will gladly continue to email the Memo to you. Please provide Brenda with an email address.

Also, the Memo is available on the District's Facebook page: ; West Marva District Church of the Brethren
And the District's web page: West Marva District Church of the Brethren